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Wednesday, December 31, 2003

# Khmer Rouge genocide policy acknowledged

By KER MUNTHIT
The Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia - A former Khmer Rouge leader expected to face a U.N. tribunal acknowledged Tuesday there is "no more doubt left" that his regime committed genocide, the first admission of the communist group's collective guilt.

Khieu Samphan's surprising statement in an interview with -The Associated Press is a major step in the long overdue effort to bring to justice those responsible for the deaths of 1.7 million Cambodians during the ultra-leftist group's 1975-79 rule.

Many of the victims were executed; the rest died of starvation, disease and overwork in the · Khmer Rouge's attempt to create an agrarian utopia. Now, with an agreement on a tribunal earlier this month between U.N. and Cambodian officials, ex-Khmer Rouge leaders should soon face charges for the first time.

A former head of state and one of the few top Khmer Rouge leaders still alive, Khieu Samphan, 72, is certain to be indicted.

Speaking by telephone from his

home, he apparently hoped to begin giving his version of Cambodia's bloody history before his likely prosecution for genocide and crimes against humanity.
He insisted he never ordered any killings
and claimed he
only learned from a documentary two months ago about the extent of the Khmer Rouge's crimes.
"Everything has to go the trial's way now, and there's no other way," he said. "I have to time pass away. But I also want the public to understand about me, too. I was not involved in any killings."
Ma
Until Tuesday, none of the Khmer Rouge's top leaders had publicly accepted that the gov ernment committed genocide
But Khieu Samphan said he realized he could no longer ig nore the Khmer Rouge's atroci ties after he saw a documentary about the notorious S-21 prison, presented to him by a Cambodian-French filmmaker, Rithy Pan.
"When I saw the film, it was hard for me to deny (the killings). There's no more doubt left," said Khieu Samphan, who lives in Pailin, 175 miles northwest of the capital, Phnom Penh.
"I was surprised, because I never thought it (the regime) went to that extent in its policies. S-21 was in the middle of Phnom Penh. It was clearly a state institution. It was part of the regime."
Until he saw the film, he said he had reserved his judgment about the prison's existence and atrocities.
As many as 16,000 people are believed to have passed through the gates of the infamous prison but only 14 are thought to have survived. The prison is now the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.

None of the Khmer Rouge's surviving leadership has faced justice. Many are infirm but- like Khieu Samphan - live and move freely in the country. Pol Pot, the regime's supremo, died in 1998.

After five years of negotiations, U.N. and Cambodian officials tentatively agreed this month on steps to set up the tribunal. But



Record reptile

* Central Maine Newspapers

U.N. tells U.S. no help needed in Libya effort

By GEORGE JAHN
Associated Press Writer

VIENNA, Austria The U.N. nuclear agency does not need American help in dismantling Libya's nascent weapons program, the agency chief told The Associated Press on Tuesday, echoing differences with Washington over Iraq and Iran.

The International Atomic Ener- Agency is happy to receive U.S. and British intelligence that will assist its inspectors in Libya, said Director General Mohamed ElBaradei.

But the IAEA doesn't want help on the ground.

"I am not familiar with anything they plan to do on a bilateral basis," ElBaradei said in an interview when asked about U.S. plans to police and scrap Libya's covert nuclear program. "As far as I'm concerned, we have the mandate, and we intend to do it alone."

The Bush administration is convinced Libya's nuclear program was far more extensive than assumed by the Vienna-based IAEA. In response, Washington has decided to send its own inspectors and British technical experts to Libya to help survey and disman-

tle its weapons programs.
ElBaradei spoke to AP a day af-
ter returning from a visit to Libya,
where he and an IAEA team visit-
ed four once-secret nuclear sites
in the capital, Tripoli. They said
that, from what they saw, Libya
was still years away from develop-
The Associated Pressing nuclear weapons.
During the trip, ElBaradei met
with Libyan leader Moammar
Gadhafi, who assured the IAEA
the court's creation has been de A giant reticulated python curls inside a cage at Curugsewu
on Tues
prepare myself not to let the political instability after Cambo- day. The 15-meter (49.21 feet) long,
447-kilogram (985 pound) chief that Libya would cooperate
dia's inconclusive general elec. snake was captured in Jambi province in Sumatera island last fully with
inspections and elimi-
tions left three parties jostling to year but only recently put on public display. If confirmed, it nate its
long-secret nuclear pro-
I would be the largest snake ever kept in captivity.
create a coalition.
gram, saying he wanted to turn
Libya into a "mainstream" nation,
IAEA spokesman Mark
Gwozdecky said.
In Washington, State Depart-
ment spokesman Adam Ereli said
Secretary of State Colin Powell
spoke with ElBaradei before and
after his visit to Libya.
"It's going to take time before
we can draw final conclusions
about the Libyan program," Ereli
said, adding that the Bush admin-
istration is planning to work with
the IAEA to determine the nature
of Libya's weapons activities.
Another official said U.S.
weapons experts are expected to
consult with Libyan experts about
the program either in Libya or a
third country in early 2004. No
dates have been set.
The White House and ElBa-
radei's agency have also had ten-
sions during the past year over
the extent of the nuclear weapons
threat in Iraq under Saddam Hus-
sein and in Iran.
The Americans invaded Iraq ar-
guing that Saddam was trying to

make nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. ElBaradei maintains that what his teams saw in the months preceding the war suggested the Iraqis were in no position to build a nuclear weapon.
So far, after eight months of U.S. control over Iraq, no such have been found.
weapons
American officials also rankled at ElBaradei's assessment in November that IAEA inspectors had found "no evidence" of an arms program in Iran, though they noted suspicious findings and criticized Tehran for hiding part of its nuclear program for years.
The United States asserts that uranium enrichment and other Iranian activities point to attempts to make nuclear weapons.

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NEW HAVEN REGISTER
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Ashcroft steps aside in leak probe
Associated Press
In a move cheered by Patrick J. Fitzgerald in Chicago,
Democrats, Deputy Attorney a veteran of terrorism and polit-
WASHINGTON Attorney General James Comey
General John Ashcroft removed himself Tuesday from the investigation into whether the Bush administration leaked a CIA operative's name to a newspaper columnist, and a career federal prosecutor from Chicago was named as special counsel to take over.
announced that Ashcroft had stepped aside to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest after reviewing evidence recently developed in the inquiry. He would not specify the nature of that evidence.

Comey said U.S. Attorney
Tonight on CPTV
The Big Band
Sounds of World
War II
8 pm
Followed by
The Brian Setzer
Orchestra: Live
in Japan
9 pm
TELEVISION HIGHLIGHTS
CPTV
cptv.org
would
ical corruption cases,
take over as a special prosecutor
and would be given "the tools to
conduct a completely indepen-
dent investigation."
power
"He has the
and
authority to make whatever
prosecutive judgments he
believes are appropriate without
having to come back to me or
anybody else at the Justice
Department for approvals,"
.Comey said.
Comey, however, will retain
ultimate authority over Fitzger-
ald as the acting attorney gener-
al for the case. Comey rejected
choosing a complete outsider to
be the special counsel.
Investigators want to know
who leaked the name of Valerie
Plame, an undercover CIA offi-
cer, to syndicated columnist
Robert Novak in July.
Plame is married to former
Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson,
who has said he believes his
wife's identity was disclosed to
discredit his assertions that the
Bush administration exaggerat-
ed Iraq's nuclear capabilities to
build a case for war.
TV TONIGHT AT A GLANCE
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2003
Super-sized

serpent!
Indonesian villagers have captured a python that is almost 49 feet long and weighs nearly 990 pounds, a local official said. If confirmed, it would be the largest snake ever kept in captivity. It's living in a primitive zoo in Curugsewu village on the country's main island of Java. An official said the reticulated python measured 48 feet 8 inches and weighed in at 983 pounds. The Guinness Book of World Records lists the longest ever captured snake to be 32 feet. The heaviest -a Burmese Python kept in Gurnee, III. weighs 402 pounds, according to the book. The Indonesian newspaper Republika said the snake, which was caught last year but only recently put on public display, eats three or four dogs a month.
Associated Press